

NOW'S THE TIME

by

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EXT. LOS ANGELES STREET - DUSK, DECEMBER, 1969

JOE TORRID, JR. (14, African-American) pedals his bicycle through a bustling neighborhood. He's in a hurry.

He pedals into the driveway of a modest two story house.

Joe's POV - The attic window. SOUND of a SAXOPHONE.

IN THE ATTIC

HENRY TORRID (22, African-American, handsome), plays scales on his ALTO SAXOPHONE. He is an excellent player. A beautiful tone. He wears a fine old SUIT and TIE.

INT. TORRID HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

JOE JR. enters to find his family watching the TV.

ON THE TELEVISION

ALEXANDER PIRNIE (50s, white), flanked by seated officials, stands before a studio audience. On each side of him is a large glass bowl, full of numbered ping pong balls.

ALEXANDER PIRNIE

Good evening. I am Congressman Alexander Pirnie.

VOICE (from the audience)

We won't go!

A moment of disorder, then quiet again.

ALEXANDER PIRNIE

Tonight's drawing will determine the order of induction for men born between January 1, 1944 and December 31, 1950. In these containers are represented every possible birth date affecting men between 18 and 26 years old..

IN THE LIVING ROOM

Meet the TORRID FAMILY (African-American):

On the edge of his la-z-boy is MR. JOE TORRID (40s, weary). He is missing his left arm. On the edge of the couch is MRS. LUCINDA TORRID (40s, nervous). Sitting on the floor in front of the TV is LUCY (8, pretty). JOE, JR. stands behind the couch.

ON THE TELEVISION

PIRNEY reaches into one bowl, grabs a ball, then efficiently moves to the other bowl, grabs a second ball. Walks to the scorer's table, then back to center stage after a quick conference.

ALEXANDER PIRNEY

September First. Young men born on
September One shall be first on
the draft-eligible list.

IN THE LIVING ROOM

LUCY claps her hands, happy.

MRS. TORRID

Hush.

LUCY

But that's not Henry's birthday.

JOE JR.

It ain't over yet, Lucy.

IN THE ATTIC

Henry's practice has intensified. He plays the scales faster and faster. The music seems his only concern.

ON THE TELEVISION

ALEXANDER PIRNEY (on the TV)

Next, is December 30. Young men
born on the thirtieth of December..

IN THE LIVING ROOM

Jaws drop.

The phone RINGS.

MR. TORRID
Get your brother.

Joe Jr. runs to the curving staircase.

UPSTAIRS

He runs down the hall to an old step ladder which leads up to the attic, climbs quickly up the ladder.

IN THE ATTIC

Joe Jr. enters. Henry plays with intensity.

JOE JR.

Hank.

(No response.)

Henry!

(Still playing, Henry swivels in his chair to face his brother.)

Pop wants you.

He finishes the chord progression. Catches his breath.

IN THE LIVING ROOM

Mr. Torrid and Lucy watch Henry come down the stairs, saxophone CASE in hand. We can hear MRS. TORRID on the phone, in the kitchen.

MRS. TORRID (voice)
Mama... I don't know... I don't know... Mama!

MR. TORRID

Henry...

ON THE TELEVISION

PIRNIE
November the 22nd, November the 22nd.

IN THE LIVING ROOM

HENRY

How long has that been on, pop?

MR. TORRID
Three minutes.

HENRY
Yeah?

MR. TORRID
Yeah.

No one wants to see their father this worried.

HENRY
Did I win?

MR. TORRID
You were third.

Mrs. Torrid comes out of the kitchen, CRYING.

MRS. TORRID
(as she hugs Henry)
My baby's not going to Vietnam...

HENRY
I'm not going, Mama.

MRS. TORRID
(holding him tighter)
My baby...

HENRY
Don't worry, Mama.

MRS. TORRID
Lucinda...

HENRY
I got to go to my show now.

JOE
Let him be, Lucinda.

She hangs on to him.

EXT. L.A. STREET - NIGHT, MINUTES LATER

A city bus stops at the curb. Henry gets out, puts his hat on as the BUS pulls away.

CUT TO

Henry walking, case in hand. Across a quiet street, a BOUNCER outside a small club watches his approach.

CUT TO

Henry in the alley behind the club. From the backstage doors, the faint SOUND of jazz inside. He assembles his SAXOPHONE.

IN THE CLUB

A Jazz Quartet plays a slow blues on a small stage. At the moment, just the stand-up bass and drums are in use.

Sitting at the piano is EDDIE (30s, white, joyful). He resembles a rock star more than a jazz pianist. He looks at his watch.

At the tenor sax is LAWRENCE (50s, African-American). Lawrence dresses like an aging CASANOVA. A black Bob Dylan.

At a table in the front row are two HIPPIES (20s, white). The lady wears a BIKINI TOP. She yawns.

EDDIE makes a small sign to the drummer, CHUCK (40s, African-American), and heads off stage.

IN THE ALLEY

Henry warms up, playing long tones on the sax.

The stage door opens. He stops playing. EDDIE comes out, with a cigarette lit.

EDDIE

Hank! You made it.

HENRY

(shakes his hand)

Hey, Eddie.

EDDIE

So there's a girl out there in a bikini.

HENRY

Oh yeah?

EDDIE

The beach is right over there. So round four o'clock, She floats in with her boyfriend, making shapes with her hands. And the dude's just nodding, up and down, up and down the entire time. He's hearing *something*, but it ain't nothing we've been playing. You ready?

HENRY

Yeah.

EDDIE

Good. But we've got to have some fun with these kids. Find out what they're on.

HENRY

Man, I just came to blow.

EDDIE

You'll blow, you'll blow. But we've been out there since three, and we need some caffeination!

IN THE CLUB

A song ends to a smattering of applause as EDDIE goes to his piano.

EDDIE

And now, my worthy constituents, we will play a tune, a very strange tune... a song for only the wee hours of the night...the dead of night. A tune I learned at a séance, to be true. A song called "The Ghost of Bird."

He starts playing: painfully slow, painfully bluesy. The band is confused.

EDDIE (singing)

Sun of my soul, Thou Savior dear,

It is not night if Thou be near:

CHUCK
 (whispers, from the drums)
 Eddie, what the fuck are you doing?

EDDIE (singing)
*O may no earth-born cloud arise
 To hide Thee from Thy Servant's eyes.'*

Sounds from the bar overwhelm the stage. Somebody leaves.

SOFT NOTES emanate from backstage. Eddie looks up from the piano, seeking the source.

EDDIE
 Be not afraid!

The SOUND rises, picks up pace, louder and louder.

EDDIE (con'td)
 He has a message!

The person who left comes back.

The ghost solo gets furious, mad with speed and variety.

EDDIE (cont'd)
 Spirit, speak to us!

The band picks up, following along.

Henry emerges on stage, headlong into the music. LEO (the bassist, Latino) laughs. The audience has AWOKEN. Henry keeps a calm, INSCRUTABLE demeanor on stage.

EDDIE (cont'd)
 Ladies and gentlemen, Mr. Henry Torrid
 on the alto saxophone.

Hearty APPLAUSE. Though a rag-tag bunch, the band is electric together.

AFTER THE SHOW

The band mingles with what's left of the audience. Henry and Eddie are still on stage. Henry is disassembling his saxophone.

EDDIE

Now, Joseph produces R&B, makes his money in soul, but he appreciates what we do, and he's got some time for us this weekend. We could use you on a couple tunes, Hank.

Henry CLICKS the case closed.

HENRY

Oh yeah?

EDDIE

We thought we'd make it with a single horn, but lately it's been a little sparse. And ever since you sat in with us last month, we've been talking it over. You want to do it?

HENRY

Okay.

EDDIE

(smiling)

Okay.

Henry's POV: LEO (the bassist) coming toward him with LOUISE, the girl with the BIKINI TOP, on his arm.

LEO

(to Louise, as they near Henry)

I think he's a little shy.

(at the stage)

Hey, Hank. Got someone here that wants to meet you. Sorry, Eddie.

Henry stares at them blankly.

LOUISE

(to Henry)

You play beautifully.

HENRY nods once.

LEO
This is Louise.

HENRY nods again. Painfully shy.

EDDIE
Hank?

LOUISE
(to Eddie)
Does he only talk through his saxophone?

INT./EXT. EDDIE'S FORD / L.A. STREET - NIGHT, LATER

Henry shakes his head, ASHAMED in the passenger seat of Eddie's FORD. Eddie drives.

EDDIE
Relax, man. When I was a kid, and a woman like that ever wanted to meet me, I probably would have thrown up on her.

HENRY
I'm twenty-two years old, Eddie.

EDDIE
Well... you're too hard on yourself.

HENRY
Fuck that, man. You saw me. That can't keep happening, man.

EDDIE
You played great though, Hank.

HENRY
I know how to play... all I do is play... but everything else... the stuff that my little brother could do... that's my house.

Eddie slams on the brakes, parks at the curb.

EDDIE
This car is a piece of shit.

HENRY
(opens the door)
Thanks for the ride.

EDDIE
Hold on. So my contact in San Francisco...
He found a *Billy Berg's*.

HENRY
Yeah?

EDDIE
In good to very good condition.

HENRY
No shit?

EDDIE
Don't smile. He wanted 250 dollars for it.
And when my man told him it was for
the goddamn piano player on the fucking
record itself, he went all the way down
to... 240.

HENRY
Thanks for trying, man.

EDDIE
Hey. It's still nice to know people pay
that much for one of your dad's records.

HENRY
It's a Charlie Parker record, Eddie.
Pops was just the man at the piano.
(gets out of the car)
Thanks for the ride. Call me about this
weekend. Something came up this afternoon...

EDDIE
You know, that pisses me off you'd say
that about your dad. I've spoken to
people who were at those gigs, and they'd
tell you...

HENRY
But have you heard the record?

EDDIE

Not yet.

HENRY

Good night, Eddie.

INT. TORRID HOUSE - NIGHT, MOMENTS LATER

Henry enters the dark living room. Puts his sax down by the couch, goes to the record cabinet. Takes out an ALBUM..

CHARLIE PARKER - *Live at Billy Berg's*. Front and center in the cover photo is Parker, but to his right is a young, dual-armed MR. TORRID at the piano.

With reverence Henry takes the record out, lays it on the turntable, sets the needle.

SOUND of STATIC.. maybe a HORN here.. CLIPPING.. PIANO there..

The record is UNPLAYABLE. Worn out. Henry removes the needle.

MRS TORRID

(comes down the stairs)

Are you hungry?

HENRY

Mama why you waiting up for me?

EXT. L.A. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - NEXT DAY

A MAILMAN pulls a mail cart down the street.

MAILMAN

Morning, Mrs. Jones.

He turns down the street, and HENRY is revealed, walking the other way.

As he walks, he reads a letter.

HENRY

(proof-reads it to himself as he walks)
To whom it may concern, my name is Henry

Torrid. I am a musician. Yesterday, in the National Draft Lottery, my birthday, April the 24th, was the third date to be chosen. I am aware of what this means..

DOWN THE STREET

The mailman leaves the driveway, continues on his way.

AT THE CORNER

Henry waits at a busy crosswalk.

Next to him are some HIPPIES holding up signs that say, HONK FOR PEACE!

Next to the hippies, Henry appears anachronistic: his pants-and-sweater look seems more from the 1950's than 1969.

A CAR HONKS repeatedly, and Henry is STARTLED. Uncomfortable in a crowd.

As he crosses the street, he goes back to his letter.

HENRY

I would be happy to volunteer my time, as a musician, in whatever capacity I'd be needed. But only as a musician, as music can be my only profession.

DOWN THE STREET

THE MAILMAN is at the Torrid Mailbox. He takes their MAIL from his CART, flips the letters into the mailbox, heads down the street.

MRS. TORRID comes out of the house.

MAILMAN

Hey, Mrs. Torrid.

MRS. TORRID

(goes straight to the mailbox)

Hey, Ted.

MAILMAN

I wanted to thank you for the Christmas Bonus. First one of the year, as always.

MRS. TORRID.
(looking through the letters)
Alright, Ted.

MAILMAN
Have a good day.

MRS. TORRID
(eyes on the letters)
You too.

Mailman goes off. Mrs. Torrid gets through all the post.
Nothing for Henry. Relief...

as a COURIER TRUCK pulls up in front of the house.

EXT. POST OFFICE - DAY, CONTINUOUS

Henry at the front doors. He folds up the letter, seals it in the envelope.

AT THE TORRID HOUSE

The COURIER gets out of his truck.

COURIER
Hi. Is this the Torrid Residence?

MRS. TORRID
Yes.

COURIER
I have a letter for... Mr. Henry Torrid.
Is he in?

LUCINDA
He's just gone down the street. But I can sign for it.

COURIER
Thanks, but he has to sign. If there was a time I could come back...

LUCINDA
Do you know what it is?

AT THE POST OFFICE

Henry waits in line.

CLERK
Next please.

He goes to the clerk, hands him his letter.

HENRY
Registered Mail, please.

AT THE TORRID HOUSE

Mrs. Torrid is in the kitchen. Very NERVOUS, she pours ICED TEA from a PITCHER into glasses.

OUTSIDE THE HOUSE

Henry turns into the driveway.

Henry's POV - MOTHER and the COURIER at the front door, sipping ICED TEAS.

IN THE LIVING ROOM, LATER

Henry reads a letter as his Mother and Father look on.

HENRY
I'll go down there. They'll have gotten my letter, then.

MRS. TORRID
They need you to be somewhere?

HENRY
Camp Pendleton.

MRS. TORRID
Where's that?

MR. TORRID
San Diego.

MRS. TORRID

When?

HENRY

When's the sixth?

MRS. TORRID

Didn't you date the letter you just sent?

HENRY

You have to do that?

MR. TORRID

It's tomorrow, Henry.

INT./EXT - GREYHOUND BUS, INTERSTATE HIGHWAY - DAY, NEXT MORNING

HENRY on the bus, headed SOUTH. He wears his fine old SUIT and HAT.

Out the window is a beautiful VIEW of the Pacific OCEAN.

EXT. GATES OF CAMP PENDLETON - DAY, LATER

The front gates of a Marine Corps base along the coastline.

Henry gets off the bus, followed by a couple other NEW RECRUITS. The NOISE of a HELICOPTER overhead blurs all other sound.

Henry's POV - the rotating blades of the chopper as it passes.

VOICE

Henry! Hey, Hank!

Henry notices JOHN (African-American, 21).

JOHN

John Benson. Third Trumpet, Jefferson High?

HENRY

(shakes his hand)

Oh, yeah. Hey man.

JOHN

So when's *your* fucking birthday?

A SERGEANT (white) approaches, carrying a CLIPBOARD of names and PHOTOS.

SERGEANT

Benson, John. Torrid, Henry?

JOHN

That's right.

SERGEANT

I'm Staff Sergeant Whitaker. I'm taking care of you boys, today. Follow me.

(leads them to a jeep)

Ever ridden in a jeep before?

IN THE JEEP

Sgt. Whitaker drives Henry and John through the base. Various companies of RECRUITS at work... jogging, drilling, obstacle coursing.

WHITAKER

Over there is the Recreation Center. Just put in a bowling alley. Got some basketball courts, too.

They pass a jogging company of recruits. One lags behind, and a DRILL SERGEANT trots alongside him

DRILL SERGEANT

(screams in his ear)

You are a piece of SHIT!

INT. FITTING ROOM, CAMP PENDLETON - DAY, LATER

A PRIVATE measures HENRY for a uniform among some other draftees. Sergeant WHITAKER supervises.

HENRY

(arms spread wide)

Excuse me? Sergeant Whitaker?

WHITAKER
Staff Sergeant Whitaker.

PRIVATE
(to Henry)
Raise your arms.

HENRY
(arms to the sky)
Staff Sergeant Whitaker, I think there's
been some confusion.

WHITAKER
Confusion.

HENRY
Yes, sir. I think I'm going to receive
a deferment.

PRIVATE
(to Henry)
Arms down. Widen your feet, please.

WHITAKER
(looks at his clipboard)
Nothing here says that you have a
deferment.

PRIVATE
(to Henry)
You can relax, now.

Private walks off.

HENRY
I've written a letter to the Draft Board,
they should have it by now, I sent it
Registered Mail. You see, I'm a musician...

Private returns, tosses Henry a neatly folded UNIFORM.
He catches it in his arms.

EXT. CAMP PENDLETON - DAY, LATER

SGT. WHITAKER walks with HENRY, JOHN, and a few other RECRUITS (African-American) that we saw in the fitting room.

STAFF SERGEANT

I need to check Torrid's status in the office. You boys wait here.

He enters the office, and the recruits mingle outside.

John goes straight to Henry.

JOHN

It true you got a deferment, Hank?

HENRY

Yeah. Well, I'm gonna' get one. I wrote a letter.

Another recruit had been listening in.

RECRUIT

(to the others)

Oh, this boy wrote a letter!

A couple recruits LAUGH.

HENRY

I'm a musician. I'm doing a record this weekend.

RECRUIT

Oh, yeah? You famous?

HENRY

No.

RECRUIT

You rich?

HENRY

No.

RECRUIT

Where you from?

HENRY

L.A. Jefferson Park.

RECRUIT

Then you're fucked like us, man! Brothas
from J-Park don't get no *deferments*.

Everyone laughs. This hits Henry HARD.

SGT. WHITAKER comes out of the office.

WHITAKER

Torrid.

TORRID

Yes?

WHITAKER

(with a hand on his shoulder)
Welcome to the Corps, son. Now, back
to business. The Induction Ceremony
will begin at 1500. Follow me.

He heads off briskly. Everyone follows save for Henry.

It's decision time. Another helicopter passes overhead.

Henry's POV - The turning blades of the chopper. It sounds
like WAR.

AT THE GATES

Henry approaches us from a distance, *SPRINTING* to the
gatehouse. He carries his folded UNIFORM like a football,
and runs right through a company of drilling RECRUITS.

DRILL SERGEANT

(football announcer voice)

The fifty! The forty! the thirty! He's
at the twenty!

Henry looks back like a running back off to the races.

DRILL SERGEANT (cont'd)

You better be faster than *that!*

A GUARD at the gate comes out of the gatehouse, but Henry
runs right by him.

EXT. FREEWAY, NORTHBOUND SIDE - MINUTES LATER

HENRY hitchhikes without success. Running backwards, thumb flailing in the air, sweating bullets. You wouldn't pick him up, either.

HITCH-HIKING, LATER

Still no success. Desperation time.

When no cars are coming, he sprints up the side of the highway. If nobody will pick him up, he'll make it home running..

Soon, he must catch his breath. Hands on his knees. Sweat, and perhaps tears, soak the highway.

Henry's POV - A BUS APPROACHES

IN THE BUS

Is an African-American CONGREGATION. They all SING, beautifully, a GOSPEL TUNE.

CONGREGATION

*Some bright morning when this life is over..
I'll fly away..
To that home on god's celestial shore..
I'll fly away..*

ON THE HIGHWAY

Henry watches the Bus pass.

EXT. GROCERY STORE, BACK ALLEY - DUSK, LATER

HENRY sits against a DUMPSTER, worn out and scared.

A DRUNK weaves by him.

DRUNK

How long you gonna be there?

HENRY

I dunno.

DRUNK
That's my spot.

He glares at Henry, and staggers past as a car comes slowly the other way.

HENRY
Pops!

The car stops. Mr. Torrid's behind the wheel.

MR. TORRID
Hank!

Henry runs to the car, gets in.

IN THE CAR

Mr. Torrid drives well with his one hand.

MR. TORRID
You alright?

HENRY
No...

MR. TORRID
I'd a been here sooner, but on the phone you told me West of the Five. Henry, West is that way. You know, by the ocean!

HENRY
Sorry, pops.

MR. TORRID
It's alright.
(sees Hank's in bad shape.)
It's alright, my boy.

INT. TORRID HOUSE, KITCHEN - THAT NIGHT

MRS. TORRID serves MEATLOAF onto plates. LUCY and JOE JR. take the plates to the dining room. We see her prepare an extra large PLATE.

IN THE LIVING ROOM

Mrs. Torrid enters. The CHILDREN set the table. Mr. Torrid watches a LAKER GAME on TV.

She goes to the window by the front door, looks out right and left.

She heads to the staircase, goes up.

IN THE ATTIC

Henry's home. He's in his chair, working on his saxophone. He tightens a few screws on the saxophone with a tiny SCREWDRIVER.

Three KNOCKS at the attic door, and the SOUND of the ladder being lowered. MRS. TORRID enters with the meatloaf.

MRS. TORRID

Hey, baby.

He sets his sax on its STAND.

MRS. TORRID (cont'd)

(hands him the plate)

You better, now?

HENRY

(eating quickly)

Yeah. I'm fine.

She goes to the corner of the room, where we see a sleeping bag laid over some old couch cushions.

MRS. TORRID

(makes his makeshift bed)

Guess you won't spend any more of your waking hours up here than you ever did. Always practicing. Only difference is, now you'll sleep up here.

HENRY

(eating)

This is good.

MRS. TORRID

(fluffing his pillow)

I bet you'll be like a cat in the sun
up here. All day playing. No one to
bother you.

(He smiles)

What do you want to drink?

HENRY

I've got plenty of water up here. That's
fine.

MRS. TORRID

Your daddy says Elgin has twenty at the
half. Lakers up six.

HENRY

That's good.

MRS. TORRID

Do you need to come downstairs again?

HENRY

I'm fine, Mamma.

MRS. TORRID

In Europe they keep these pans by the
bed..

HENRY

I'm *fine*.

MRS. TORRID

Alright.

She kisses him, heads back down the staircase.

He puts the plate aside. Takes up the sax, and starts
whispering through some chords.

Soon, Mr. Torrid comes up.

MR. TORRID

Keep playing, keep playing.

Soon, JOE JR comes up, with a FISHBOWL. In it is a FISH.
He puts it on the table, and Henry laughs through a chord.

Soon, LUCY comes up, with FISH FOOD.

LUCY
(to Henry, as she feeds the fish)
Mr. Gold isn't yours forever.

JOE JR.
Lucy...

HENRY
(stops playing)
I'll take good care of him.

LUCY
Mama says I still get to feed him.

HENRY
I'll keep an eye on him for you, then.

LUCY
What does that mean? Keep an eye on?

MR. TORRID
Let's let him finish his scales, now.

JOE JR.
(leading Lucy down the stairs)
It means if Mama don't bring Henry dinner
on time, He'll eat him.

MR. TORRID
Junior!

IN THE HALLWAY

MR. TORRID descends the little staircase after his
children. MRS. TORRID is there, waiting for him. She grabs
him.

IN THE ATTIC

Henry sits, alone.

MRS. TORRID
(voice, downstairs)
Joe...

MR. TORRID

(voice)
He'll hear you.

Then, the SOUND of the ladder being folded up.

IN THE HALLWAY

Gripped by his wife, Mr. Torrid raises the folded ladder up into the ceiling.

INT. TORRID HOUSE, ATTIC - LATER THAT NIGHT

Henry WRITES at his desk, in his BED-CLOTHES.

He works on a song, and hums the melody to himself.

EXT. TORRID HOUSE - DAY, NEXT MORNING

JOE JR. and LUCY ride off to school on their BICYCLES. LUCY waves to the attic window.

JOE JR.
Don't wave up there.

LUCY
Why not?

JOE JR.
I've told you a hundred times, why not.

INT. TORRID HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

MR. TORRID plays the piano.

MRS. TORRID enters, plate of eggs in hand, heads to the window by the door casually.

JOE
He's not a fugitive, Lucinda.

LUCINDA
(as she walks to the window)
There ain't nothing wrong with being..

IN THE ATTIC

Henry, in his makeshift bed, WAKES to the SOUND of a big BUICK cranking into park in front of the house.

He goes to the window. Peaks out.

HENRY
(whispering)
No, no, no...

IN THE LIVING ROOM

Lucinda is at the window.

LUCINDA
Joe!

IN THE ATTIC

Henry's POV, out the attic window: a young FEDERAL AGENT (25, white) gets out of the car. His black HAT and bland black SUIT scream, GOVERNMENT.

The Agent heads to Torrid front door as a COP-CAR PASSES on the street.

HENRY
no, no, no...

Henry goes to his desk. SCRIBBLES something on a page in a hurry.

IN THE LIVING ROOM

MR. and MRS. TORRID sit on the couch.

MRS. TORRID
We've been through this a hundred times.

MR. TORRID
Yup.

MRS. TORRID
He can't search the house.

MR. TORRID

Nope.

MRS. TORRID
So don't panic.

MR. TORRID
You don't panic.

IN THE ATTIC

Henry PANICS. He has half his suit on, and struggles to step into one of his shoes.

HENRY
(whispers)
Shit, shit, shit..

IN THE LIVING ROOM

MRS. TORRID opens the door as the agent KNOCKS.

The young AGENT smiles without teeth, takes his hat off.

AGENT
Good morning.

CUT TO

HENRY, ear to the attic window, hears the front door SHUT.

HENRY
(whispers)
Now.

Puts his hat on.

CUT TO

HENRY climbing out the attic window, saxophone case in hand.

He's in such a hurry he trips, NEARLY FALLS off the roof, but catches himself, case hanging over the edge.

IN THE LIVING ROOM

Agent, Mr. and Mrs. Torrid sit tensely.

AGENT

In his refusal to attend the Induction Ceremony, Henry Torrid has committed a felony. When found, he will face a prison term of up to five years and a fine of 10,000 dollars. Now, I understand your son is an adult, and that you are no longer liable for his choices. But I am here today because this address still seems to be his residence.

MR. TORRID

This is where he takes his mail. But he's a musician. He's hardly ever home, and he isn't here now.

EXT. TORRID HOUSE - DAY, CONTINUOUS

Henry, case in one hand, HANGS from a tree limb next to the house. Lets go of the limb, FALLS...

to a rough landing. The case never touches the ground, but an ankle was TWISTED.

HENRY

Shit!

HOBBLES to the side fence, climbs over.

NEXT DOOR

An OLD LADY (African-American) sits on her back patio as Henry staggers into her yard.

OLD LADY

What are you doin', Henry?

HENRY

(takes his hat off as he limps past)
I'm travelin', Mrs. Green. Travelin'.

INT. TORRID HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

AGENT

Now, Mr. Torrid, I read here that you are

the recipient of a large government pension, earned via service in the Navy?

MR. TORRID
That's correct.

AGENT
I can only assume that...

MR. TORRID
I lost my arm in combat, yes.

AGENT
I must tell you, Mr. Torrid, that if it were to be found that you had or are currently providing shelter, or assistance of any kind to Henry while he is...

MRS. TORRID
We don't know where he is.

AGENT
I understand. But I should let you know, Mr. Torrid, that if you were to aid your son in any way at this time, then the government would have license to freeze your pension... and possibly arrest you.

MRS. TORRID
How old are you, sir?

AGENT
I'm twenty five.

MRS. TORRID
Why aren't you in Vietnam?

MR. TORRID
Lucinda.

Agent gets up.

AGENT
I think I've said all I needed today.